

## WHO DOES GAP ACCOMPANY?

We provide accompaniment to organizations and individuals involved in key legal cases seeking **JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY** for genocide and crimes against humanity – including massacres, torture and forced disappearances – committed during Guatemala's internal armed conflict. This includes one of our longest and most extensive accompaniment relationships, with the witnesses and communities of the Association for Justice and Reconciliation (AJR). A courageous group of survivors, the AJR filed charges in 2000 and 2001 against former military dictators Efraín Ríos Montt, Romeo Lucas García and their military high commands.

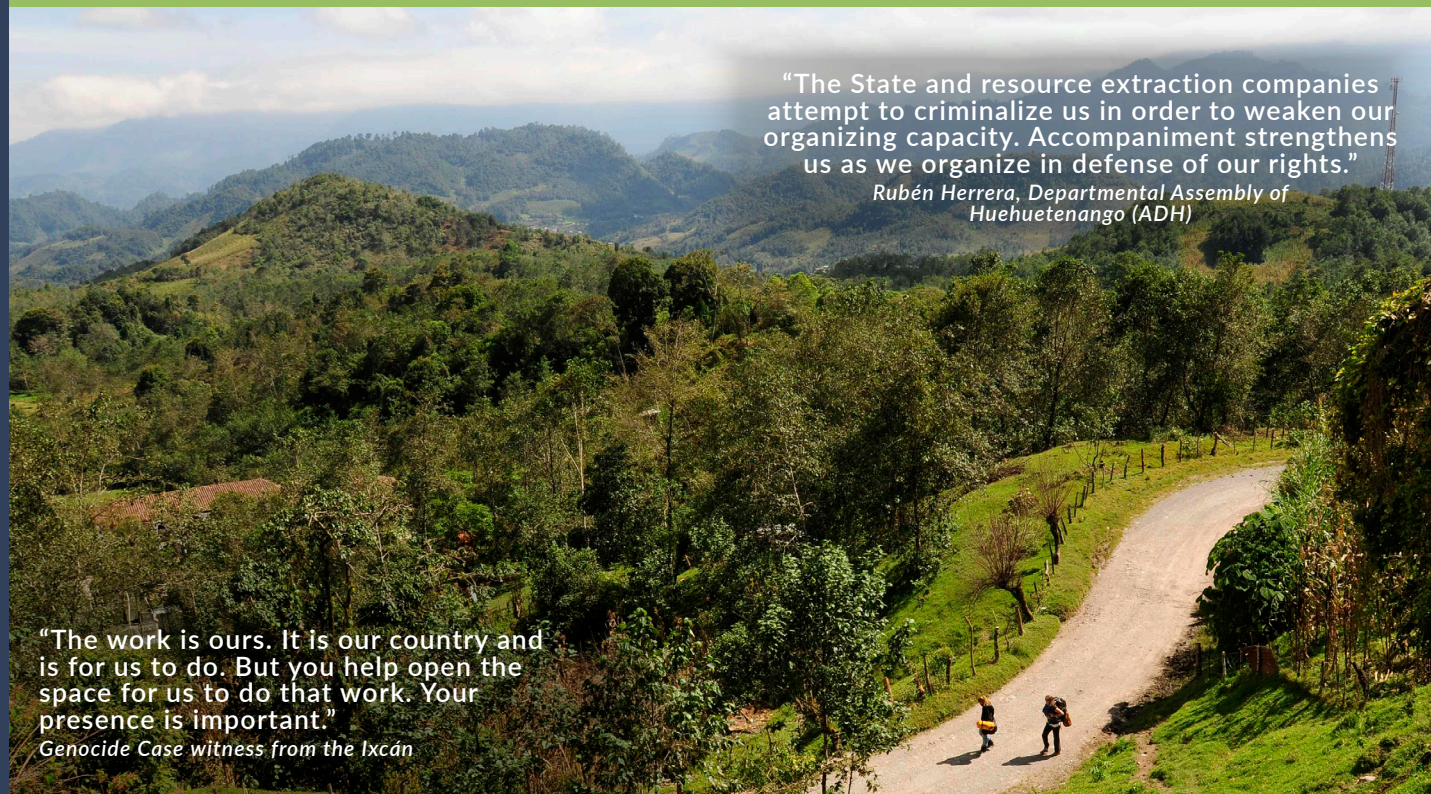


PHOTO: Julia Cortéz, former president of the AJR, celebrates during the 2013 sentence that convicted Ríos Montt of genocide and crimes against humanity.  
Credit: James Rodríguez

In the Guatemalan post-conflict context, international investment in large-scale mega-development projects like mining and hydroelectric dams increased. So, too, did the attacks against community leaders and organizations speaking out against these industries and in **DEFENSE OF LIFE AND TERRITORY**. GAP provides ongoing accompaniment to individuals and organizations under threat and increasingly criminalized for their organizing in defense of their resources, communities, culture and human rights.



## GUATEMALA ACCOMPANIMENT PROJECT (GAP)



"The State and resource extraction companies attempt to criminalize us in order to weaken our organizing capacity. Accompaniment strengthens us as we organize in defense of our rights."

Rubén Herrera, Departmental Assembly of Huehuetenango (ADH)

"The work is ours. It is our country and is for us to do. But you help open the space for us to do that work. Your presence is important."  
Genocide Case witness from the Ixcán

## WAYS TO CONNECT:

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**NETWORK IN  
SOLIDARITY  
WITH THE PEOPLE  
OF GUATEMALA**





"The spirit of accompaniment - go where your presence is requested, stand in solidarity with others as they pursue their work, and help to amplify their voices - has transformed the way we approach social justice partnerships."

- Chris Sutton, member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington - Partners for Arlington and Guatemala (GAP Sponsoring Community)

## WHAT IS ACCOMPANIMENT AND WHY IS IT NECESSARY?

NISGUA is one of many organizations worldwide using international accompaniment as a strategy in the global struggle for the protection of human rights. Individuals and organizations under threat request an international presence as a security measure to dissuade attacks and create a safer space for them to carry out their human rights work.

In Guatemala, state and corporate actors, as well as parallel and clandestine power structures dating from the internal armed conflict and favored by the climate of impunity in the country, continue to exert power through violence, threats and intimidation. When human rights violations such as these take place, the monitoring and reporting done by NISGUA accompaniers through the Guatemala Accompaniment Project (GAP) serves to alert the international community. Our networks take action and pressure the Guatemalan government, transnational and other actors to encourage the protection of human rights.

"In Guatemala, human rights accompaniment is an attempt to leverage privileged Northern citizenship against the active forces of U.S. imperialism, criminalization, and state violence that undermine movements for justice and self-determination. We accompany to hold ourselves accountable to the social privileges we hold, to manifest our commitments to social justice through our physical presence, and to engage in shared learning for stronger movements across borders."

- David Imhoff, former GAP accompanier

## HOW DOES ACCOMPANIMENT WORK?

### ACCOMPANIED GROUPS

Individuals and organizations request the physical presence of international accompaniers and share information about their work and the status of human rights in their communities.

### GAP RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

Applicants participate in a 7-day, intensive training in California before training and placement in Guatemala. Women, people of color, LGBTQ people, and individuals who are involved with U.S. social movements are strongly encouraged to apply.

### SPONSORING COMMUNITIES

NISGUA links accompaniers with existing grassroots communities in the U.S. that provide a modest monthly stipend, maintain regular communication, work to share information and take action in their local community.

### ACOGUATE

Accompaniers represent GAP in the international ACOGUATE project in Guatemala for a minimum of six months on one of the regional or mobile teams.

### U.S. CONNECTIONS AND MOVEMENT-BUILDING AT HOME

Accompaniers amplify the voices of Guatemalan human rights defenders by sharing their stories with U.S. audiences through letters, blogs, articles, speaking tours and workshops. Communities and individuals across the U.S. build local and national networks to take action in support of Guatemalan human rights defenders and their calls for justice, dignity, and respect for the earth.

## POLITICAL EDUCATION AND PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION IS THE KEY TO SOLIDARITY

Through the Guatemala Accompaniment Project (GAP), NISGUA recognizes the U.S. role in Guatemala and the interconnected nature of global oppression. GAP provides a means for people living in the global north to utilize their privilege and access to amplify the voices of those most impacted by U.S. imperialism and injustice. As a solidarity organization, we believe that the political education and personal transformation of our U.S. volunteers and local communities is key to our collective liberation.

Likewise, we are also committed to increasing the participation of people in the U.S. who are similarly impacted by the same global systems that violate human rights and put at risk those working for true self-determination and justice in Guatemala.